



## Klamath Network Featured Creature

### September 2010

#### *Pallid bat* (*Antrozous pallidus*)

##### FIELD NOTES:

##### General Description:

Pallid bats are one of the largest bat species found in the Klamath Network. With average body masses of about 20 grams, they are more than double the size of the Townsend's big-eared bat and the various *Myotis* species of our region. The ears of the Pallid bat are a notable feature, with an average ear length of nearly half its body length. Other distinguishing characteristics of the Pallid bat include blonde body fur, large eyes, and a prominent, blunt snout.

##### Habitat:

Pallid bats typically inhabit rocky areas, where they roost in caves and rock crevices, though, like many bat species, they are also known to make use of hollow trees, mines, and buildings. Pallid bats are often considered to be desert dwellers, though their ranges do intersect other types of environments. Pallid bats do not migrate, so roost and hibernacula sites are chosen from within the same general area.

##### Reproduction and Development:

Pallid bat maternity roost sizes are fairly small, usually less than 100 bats, and highly variable, with colonies frequently splitting and moving to different locations. Mating generally occurs in the fall, and the young are usually born in mid-summer, often in June. Unlike most bats, which give birth to a single pup, Pallid bats typically give birth to twins. As they are mammals, female Pallid bats nurse their young with milk, though they are also known to bring arthropods back to the roost, introducing them to the diet of the young during the later stages of lactation. The young become volant (able to fly) after about five to six weeks, but sexual maturity is not reached for approximately two years.



Copyright Merlin Tuttle, Bat Conservation International



Copyright 2010 American Museum of Natural History

##### Distribution:

The Pallid bat is widespread throughout the western United States, with a range covering much of northern Mexico and extending just into Canada.

##### Cool Fact:

Pallid bats are quite vocal, making liberal use of complex social calls in addition to normal use of echolocation for navigation and hunting. These social calls may be used for tracking each other while hunting and reassembling at roost sites. Because social calls are at relatively low frequencies, they can be heard by the unaided human ear.

##### Diet:

Pallid bats, like most North American bats, are insectivores. They are unique, though, in that they primarily feed on the ground or from foliage, as opposed to catching prey in flight. The wings of Pallid bats are often scratched or torn from shuffling across rocky ground surfaces, where they hunt beetles, grasshoppers, crickets, centipedes, and scorpions (that's right, scorpions!). Pallid bats are also listed as one of only 10 confirmed carnivorous bat species, as they occasionally eat small vertebrates, such as lizards. Whereas most bats use echolocation to find prey, Pallid bats also rely on their heightened sense of hearing to listen for prey-generated sounds, such as the footsteps of insects.

##### Where to See It in the Klamath Parks:

Pallid bats have been confirmed at Crater Lake National Park, Lava Beds National Monument, and Redwood National Park. Lava Beds is home to a large population of Pallid bats. Because Pallid bats are quite elusive, roosting in caves and crevices, they are difficult to see (or even find). Pallid bats might be glimpsed, however, as silhouettes against the sky at dusk.

##### More Information:

Altringham, John D. Bats: Biology and Behaviour. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996.  
Kunz, Thomas H., and M. Brock Fenton, eds. Bat Ecology. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003.  
Tuttle, Merlin D. America's Neighborhood Bats. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1988.